

Message Text

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ACTION ITFE-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 DHA-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01

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O 021530Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3200

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3355

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF CVIC VN SN

SUBJ: VISIT OF SPECIAL IATF TEAM TO SINGAPORE

1. SUMMARY. TEAM ARRIVED SINGAPORE EVENING AUGUST 1 IN COMPANY ICEM TEAM FROM THAILAND. DURING DAY OF AUGUST 2, TEAM DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH AMBASSADOR AND STAFF, CALLED UPON ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY HOME AFFAIRS AND IN COMPANY OF EFFECTIVE AND ACTIVE UNHCR REP VISITED REFUGEE CAMP ON ST. JOHN'S ISLAND. TEAM PLANS TO DEPART FOR HONG KONG AUGUST 3. END SUMMARY.

2. TEAM ARRIVED FROM KUALA LUMPUR EVENING OF AUGUST 1. ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, CALLED UPON AMBASSADOR AND WITH EMBASSY STAFF DISCUSSED REFUGEE SITUATION IN US, EAST ASIA AND SINGAPORE IN PARTICULAR.

3. CALL UPON ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS S.R. NATHAN WAS SHORT, CRISP AND TO THE POINT. NATHAN INDICATED GOS CONSIDERED REFUGEE PROBLEM WAS PRINCIPALLY ONE FOR UNHCR AND US AND THAT GOS HAD DONE ITS SHARE NOT ONLY BY STAGING CURRENT GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 1000 ON ST. JOHN'S ISLAND BUT IN ACCEPTING FOR RESETTLEMENT 110 VIETNAMESE FISHERMEN, LOCAL VIEW APPARENTLY IS THAT THIS FIGURE IS PROPORTIONAL IN NUMBER IN TERMS OF THE 130,000 REFUGEES IN THE US AND THE RESPECTIVE POPULATIONS AND TERRITORY OF SINGAPORE AND THE US. ACTING PERM SEC EXPRESSED HIS REGRET OVER SLOW MOVEMENT OF US SHARE
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OF REFUGEES. HE ALSO SAID GOS WOULD EXPECT US TO TAKE AS MANY

REFUGEES FROM SINGAPORE AS MALYSIA.

4. DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBASSY, UNHCR REP AND ACTUAL VISIT TO REFUGEE SITE ON ST. JOHN'S ISLAND REVEALS THAT OF A TOTAL OF 964 REFUGEES THAT WERE UNABLE TO CONTINUE TOWARDS OTHER PORTS, PARTICULARLY SUBIC BAY AND GUAM, 110 HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY SINGAPORE, 3 HAVE VOLUNTARILY RETURNED TO VIETNAM, 124 HAVE GONE TO FRANCE, 16 HAVE DEPARTED FOR THE US. NOW PENDING ARE SOME 205 FOR AUSTRALIA (THIS MAY UP TO 2201. APPROXIMATELY 248 FOR THE US, 9 TO CANADA AND 2 FOR THE ARGENTINE. CONVERSATIONS WITH UNHCR REP WHO HAS BEEN KEY FACTOR IN FRENCH AND AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE INDICATE ACTUAL NUMBER OF THOSE WHO COULD QUALIFY FOR THE US COULD BE AS HIGH AS 400 UNDER NON-EXPANDED CRITERIA. BECAUSE EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN STAFFED TO CONDUCT ANY INTERVIEWS ON ST. JOHN'S ISLAND AND HAD TO RELY ON INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM UNHCR REP IN ORDER TO DETERMINE REFUGEES WHO MEET CRITERIA, TEAM RECOMMENDS THAT TDY INS OFFICER REVIEW ALL CASES AT THE SAME TIME AS 3 REQUIRED AFFIDAVITS ARE COMPLETED.

5. VISIT TO REFUGEE SITE. CURRENT REFUGEE POPULATION IS LOCATED ON FORMER QUARANTINE STATION AND DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER SITUATED ON ST. JOHN'S ISLAND. SITE IS EASILY THE BEST ADMINISTERED AND PLEASANT OF THOSE VISITED BECAUSE OF THE ESTABLISHED AND WELL MAINTAINED HOSPITAL INSTALLATION. WHILE REFUGEES EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN TEAM'S VISIT AND WERE VISIBLY ANXIOUS ABOUT THEIR FATE, THEY WERE OBVIOUSLY WELL CARED FOR. MEDICAL PROBLEMS ARE MINIMAL, FOOD, PREPARED BY VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES IS HOSPITAL DIET (2400 CALORIES PER DAY) AND DOCTOR IS ON FULL TIME DUTY. PICKET BOAT MAKES 5 TRIPS EACH DAY TO FACILITATE VISITS TO HOSPITALS AND VISITORS TO ISLAND. TEAM OBSERVED MOST OF THE 34 SMALL CRAFT WHICH BROUGHT THE REFUGEES, MOORED IN A COVE BELOW THE HOSPITAL SITE. TEAM DEPARTED ISLAND WHILE REFUGEE SOCCER TEAM WAS PLAYING LOCAL SINGAPORE SCHOOL. HOLDRIDGE

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